

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 19, 2005

Chairman Jerry Lewis  
House Appropriations Committee  
H218 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman,

We are heartened to see that the President's Budget draws attention to fighting child exploitation, combating violence against women, providing victims' services and compensation, and battling human trafficking. We can never do enough to support safety in our communities.

**Although we support the President's goal of offering relief to victims of crime, we are concerned that the proposed budget seriously jeopardizes the future of the funding mechanism for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)--the Crime Victims Fund.** VOCA was enacted by the initiative of President Ronald Reagan to pay for victims' services and compensations. It operates on money collected from criminal offenders, not taxpayers, that is then placed in the Crime Victims Fund. In 2000, because of wide fluctuations of deposits into the Fund, Congress capped the money VOCA can use each year. The amounts above the cap are retained in the Fund as a "reserve." The reserve is invaluable because it helps stabilize VOCA in years when deposits fall below the annual cap. The account remains consistent even though collections may fluctuate year to year. Without the Crime Victims Fund to fall back on, VOCA funding would be unstable.

Both the underlying authorizing statute and Congressional appropriators have consistently pledged that all amounts in the Crime Victims Fund be kept there for victims. Specifically, the statute reads, "Sums deposited in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be available for expenditure under this chapter for grants under this chapter without fiscal year limitation. Notwithstanding section 1402(d)(5), all sums deposited in the Fund in any fiscal year that are not made available for obligation by Congress in the subsequent fiscal year shall remain in the Fund for obligation in future fiscal years, without fiscal year limitation." (42 U.S.C. 10601(c)).

Perhaps equally important, when they imposed the annual cap on Fund obligations in Fiscal Year 2000, Congressional appropriators did so with the express intention of keeping those funds available for future victims' services. In the conference report (106-479), they stated, "The conferees have taken this action [limiting annual Fund obligations] to protect against wide fluctuations in receipts into the Fund, and to ensure that a stable level of funding will remain available for these programs in future years."

The VOCA Fund is a crucial resource many communities and organizations rely on for victims' services and compensation. It helps provide rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and



victims' compensation for court costs, funeral services, and medical expenses. Rescinding \$1.267 billion from the Crime Victims Fund as proposed by President Bush's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget would renege on the promise of Congress to fund these and other victims' services and compensations.

There are approximately 4,400 agencies that depend upon VOCA's victim assistance funds to provide direct services to 3.6 million crime victims a year. In addition, there are 165,000 victims who received some \$434 million (State and VOCA funds) in crime victim compensation benefits. Currently, VOCA is the only Federal program that supports services to victims of all types of crimes: homicide fatalities, drunk driving, elder financial exploitation, identity theft, robbery, and rape.

In closing, we appreciate the President's support for a compassionate society which offers relief to victims of crime. Protecting the Crime Victims Fund constitutes one significant way in which to display this compassion and thus we urge you to retain the Fund balance for future victims' services.

Sincerely,

Attul

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Sam Brownback

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